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mate paradox, the final question of life. For the name of that stone is Pain. We live in a world where innocent women die in agony, where love and honor run to waste, where cause and effect mock at our sense of personal justice. Why must this have come to be? Science answers: "By necessity." But that is no answer: who is Necessity? Buddhism answers: "By desire." But that is no answer: it is only anæsthesia. Christianity answers: "By original sin." But that only delays the question. Why then was sin let loose upon us? Did God make Satan too strong to bind? And there we are back to the Stone again. Mr. Chesterton very wisely says that God divided us from Himself that between separate selves love might be. Very well: it is true that you can love your child only because he is not yourself; but would you hurt him for the sake of comforting him again? Mr. Chesterton, like his opponents, has failed to define the goal of his progress; for he has not defined Good and Evil; and they can be defined. He lays aside Sin, whose existence some deny, to begin his argument with the unquestioned fact of Madness. He would have done better to begin with Pain.

"Orthodoxy" is the most important religious work that has appeared since Emerson. This statement will merely provoke incredulity, because Emerson is dead and Mr. Chesterton alive. It is made, therefore, not in the vain hope of carrying conviction, but merely for the sake of going on record as having made it. But as "Heretics" demanded a sequel, so "Orthodoxy" does far more: it makes its author responsible for a sequel.

BRIAN HOOKER.

THE LIFE OF HENRY IRVING.*

FROM the bibliography which Mr. Brereton appends to each of his volumes, we learn that his is the twenty-seventh book which has had to do with the career of Henry Irving as an actor or as a manager. His own is the latest, as it is the most elaborate and comprehensive. It rivals Lord Morley's "Life of Gladstone" in its thoroughness and in its amplitude. Indeed, it may not unfairly be described as the most comprehensive biography of an actor—who was not also a dramatist—which has yet appeared.

* "The Life of Henry Irving." By Austin Brereton. With twenty-three illustrations. 2 vols. London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co. 1908.

It supplies all the information which the most devoted student of the stage can demand. It is a worthy memorial of a fine and sincere personality and it is a model of modest and painstaking accuracy.

Mr. Brereton declares in his preface that as his book tells "the story of the life of Henry Irving, it follows that, in regard to the author, it is almost entirely impersonal"; and he asserts that in writing the book he has assumed "the attitude of a third person." And this is exactly what he has done. Keeping himself in the background, he has centred attention upon Henry Irving. He has made little or no attempt at criticism or at appreciation of his own; he has been satisfied to give us a solid record of the achievements of Henry Irving. The style of the book is a little colorless and we are surprised by no sudden flashes of critical insight, lighting up the darker corners of the actor's art; but the job is done in workmanlike fashion, with indefatigable industry and with abundant discretion.

If the author is sparing of his own criticism he is lavish in quotation from the criticism of others, unfavorable as well as favorable, hesitating as well as eulogistic. It seems that the actor had kept from the beginning of his career a complete collection of his newspaper notices; and this has enabled the biographer to prepare a full list of the six hundred and seventy-one parts acted by Henry Irving during his scant half-century on the stage. Nearly six hundred of these characters were undertaken by the actor in his 'prentice years in the provinces before he came up to London; and less than thirty were first seen during the final quarter-century of his life after he became his own manager. The extraordinary variety of the characters impersonated by the actor in his earlier years on the stage is significant, for it was by this youthful hard work that his native gift was developed, trained and made efficient. An art—and especially the difficult art of acting—can be acquired only by incessant practice.

The newspaper articles which Mr. Brereton quotes from, judiciously and yet freely, show that Irving very soon after he went on the stage revealed his individuality; and even when he held only a humble position on the stage, there were not lacking keen-eyed critics who saw promise in the young actor's work. When Mr. Brereton has carried Henry Irving to London, he gives us

fuller details. He supplies us with the cast of the plays in which the actor took part; and he gives the exact date of the production and counts the number of performances. And when the biographer comes to the period of Henry Irving's splendid management of the Lyceum, he supplies us, along with the casts of the several productions, the gross receipts of the several plays and the profit or loss of the successive seasons. We are here informed fully as to the immense gains made by the actor and manager in his several tours here in the United States, those tours which were like triumphal progresses through a friendly country. The total receipts of his eight visits to America were nearly three millions and a half; and in 1899-1900 his average profit was more than five thousand dollars a week.

Not only does Mr. Brereton quote freely from the newspaper criticisms, he cites skilfully those speeches in which Henry Irving was often reminiscent and autobiographic. And he gives many an extract from the more formal lectures which the actor delivered from time to time at Harvard and Columbia and afterward at Oxford and Cambridge. In these carefully considered addresses Henry Irving was constantly pleading for his own art and for the drama which as an actor he interpreted. If the theatre holds a loftier position to-day in Great Britain and in the United States than it did half a century ago, as it undoubtedly does, a large share of the credit must be given to Henry Irving. Especially worthy of note are the opinions he frequently expressed as to the value of an endowed theatre, of a temple of the drama which should not be wholly dependent upon the takings at the door.

It is now more than forty years since the present writer had the pleasure of first seeing Henry Irving on the stage, as *Abel Murcott*, when the elder Sothorn acted *Lord Dundreary* in Paris in 1867. He saw him again in 1870 in the "Two Roses" and in 1873 in "Richelieu"; and he had opportunity to witness the performance of nearly all the actor's later parts. Perhaps this is a qualification for expressing complete agreement with Mr. Brereton's claim that Henry Irving ripened in his art as he advanced and that he was in continual progress. He had his mannerisms and his limitations, no doubt; but so has every artist, even if his were more obvious than those of most artists of equal renown. He was greater in character-parts than in the figures

of pure tragedy; at least we recall him more readily in the "Bells" and in "Louis XI" than in "Macbeth" or "Lear." But he had many of the qualities of genius—energy, sincerity, imagination, nobility of soul and the power of projecting a character; he had also marvellous skill in stage management.

It was often made a matter of reproach to the manager of the Lyceum that while he was doing much for the theatre he was doing little for the drama of his own time. And Mr. Brereton's list of the new plays produced by Henry Irving shows that there was certain foundation for this charge. In the quarter of a century of his management he brought out only one original play of genuine poetic value, Tennyson's "Becket." It is true that two other modern plays in which he appeared deserve a certain commendation, Wills's "Charles I" and Comyns Carr's "King Arthur." For the rest, for "Vanderdecken" and "Ravenswood," for "The Medicine Man" and "Peter the Great," there is little to be said. Apparently the actor-manager's judgment in regard to unacted plays was not very acute; and it may be that he felt this and that this was the reason he went out of his own country and besought Sardou to write "Robespierre" and "Dante" for him—plays which have not been deemed worthy of performance in Paris. But there is this to be said also, that few actors of the highest rank have ever done much for dramatic literature. John Philip Kemble did little, and Edwin Booth did nothing at all; they were satisfied with the characters which Shakespeare had created and they did not care to adventure themselves on uncharted voyages in search of novelty.

There remains to be noted again the fact that Mr. Brereton has done his work with praiseworthy self-suppression. His discretion is indisputable; but his reticence allows us now and again to catch a glimpse of significant incidents which he does not care to dwell on. For example, there is in the second volume, on page 129, a note on the late Richard Mansfield's tenancy of the Lyceum, which is not without interest. Especially dignified in tone is the biographer's account of the invitation which Henry Irving extended to Edwin Booth, and of the memorable performances in which the foremost actor of the United States appeared by the side of the foremost actor of Great Britain, and as his guest.

BRANDER MATTHEWS.